

substitute the tyrant with the crown on his head for the tyrant who wore the tiara. It was, at all events, a fell blow to traditional ecclesiastical authority as incorporated in the Roman bishop. It destroyed the outworks of the Romanist fortress, and weakened the position for the Protestant attack. That position was further undermined by the suppression of the monasteries, though the spoil went mostly to enrich the crown and its servile supporters. And in giving to the English people the Bible in the English tongue, Henry indirectly went a long way in undermining not only the old creed to which he held fast, but the despotic principles of government which he exemplified so cruelly against both Papists and Protestants. The English Bible in the hands of the Puritan Protestants was to become a most mighty weapon of offence against the absolutism which now reigned supreme in both Church and State. Protestantism of the Puritan type was in the long run to lead to memorable political results, and inspire the spirit of resistance to autocratic government. Under the pressure of persecution, the English Protestant, like the French Huguenot, was driven to protest against the arbitrary oppression of conscience, to question the right of kings to govern according to their own will. The religious reformation acted, in fact, as a tonic on the nation throughout the critical period of Tudor despotism. It roused men like Ponet to arraign the despotism that under a Mary offered its holocausts to the demon of intolerance. It roused the early Puritans under Elizabeth to protest against an Act of Uniformity, which would allow no conscientious dissent from the official Anglican religion. And what these Puritans could achieve as champions of the rights of Parliament and subject against Stuart absolutism, the history of the seventeenth century was to show, in startling fashion, to kings who claimed a divine right to override the laws.

Even under the *regime* of the tyrant Henry, opposition to the royal will on grounds of conscience was not quite dormant, though the earlier Protestants were disposed to magnify the royal office. Some of the Protestant heretics would not be bullied, even in the royal presence, into the recantation of their creed. Witness the stout bearing of John Lambert, who, on the 16th November 1538, was arraigned in West-